

to the Continent in the reign of Charlemagne. Its greatest exponent was Alcuin, who became the leader of the educational revival that lent so much lustre to Charlemagne's government

That revival was unfortunately of short duration. Succeeding the activity of Celt and Saxon monk in Gaul and Germany, a long period of blight ensued once more. Patrons of learning in high places, educationists who showed some zeal for a "humane" culture and some proficiency in it, still appeared at intervals. The Emperor Otto, for example, in the tenth century, Rabanus Maurus in the ninth, Pope Sylvester II. in the eleventh, John of Salisbury in the twelfth. In some of the schools a few of the Latin classics at least—Horace, Virgil, Sallust, Livy—were studied, and throughout the whole of the Middle Ages they could count on a few readers of exceptional culture. But if the Latin classics were not entirely neglected in some of the schools, or superseded by the scholastic philosophy, only the rarest acquaintance with Greek, as in the case of the Englishmen Grossteste and Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century, is perceptible. And what knowledge there was, was probably very superficial. But, even if there had been more knowledge of Latin and Greek than there was, it could not have availed against the spirit of the age. The appreciation of the free humanist spirit that had inspired and pervaded art and literature in the Roman world was possible only in the narrowest degree. The dominant influence was adverse to the free exercise of the human faculties and feelings. The classic conception of life was stifled, and not till this larger, freer conception was revived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the humanist had displaced the theological view, could humanity regain the path of intellectual progress. A crude asceticism in the monasteries, while acting as a needful antidote to the crass immorality of the age, turned from the allurements of pagan learning as snares for the soul, hindrances to the true Christian life of self-abnegation. This theory of Christian life sprang from the view that the human soul could only be debased by the enjoyment of the things of sense, that human reason must be ignorant, slavishly passive, scourged into acquiescence in a grovelling faith, if it was to be holy and humble. Teaching and practice